

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address May 30, 2014 “Ukraine Codel Recap”

Hello this is your Congressman, Michael Burgess. Over Memorial Day weekend, I had the opportunity to travel to Ukraine as part of a Congressional delegation. Our purpose was to join an international community of observers during Ukraine’s presidential election.

It was important for me to be there for many reasons. First, I am a member of the Helsinki commission, which is tasked with advancing international security. We do this through the promotion of human rights, democracy and economic, environmental and military cooperation in 57 countries, including Ukraine.

But more than that, it was important because I believe that a free, independent and democratic Ukraine is in America’s best interest. Ukrainians have spoken out and have overwhelmingly chosen a path of democracy and freedom from Russian influence.

In turn, Ukraine last Sunday held a free and fair election, showing determination and courage in the face of Russian threats.

As a group, we visited 17 polling stations in the Kyiv vicinity, checked voter lists and looked for signs of ballot stuffing or intimidation. I personally can say I did not see any irregularities. The general atmosphere of the election day was serious and reverent. The voter turnout was high. And as an American Congressman, I was welcomed kindly at polling stations. The Ukrainians saw my presence as a sign of support for their country and the legitimacy of their election, which is exactly what it was.

In addition to our election day work, I had a chance to meet with the Ukrainian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, where we discussed Ukraine’s energy needs and how Texas can play a role.

I can also report that the Prime Minister has shown himself to be a friend to the United States. He told us that Russia has been a destabilizing force. There was emotion in his voice as he described the situation on the ground in his country.

The trip showed me, above all else, that we should support efforts to create a more independent and democratic Ukraine that is free from corruption. A strong and free Ukraine will be an important friend of America. It will be a country with which our

government can cooperate on international security, and one with which our companies can do business.

As always, I appreciate your questions and comments on this issue. Thank you for taking the time to listen. May God bless you and your family, and as always, may God bless Texas.